(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
24 March 2005 (24.03.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2005/026951 A1

(51) International Patent Classification[7]: G06F 9/445, H04L 9/00

(21) International Application Number: PCT/AU2004/001267

(22) International Filing Date: 17 September 2004 (17.09.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
2003905097 18 September 2003 (18.09.2003) AU

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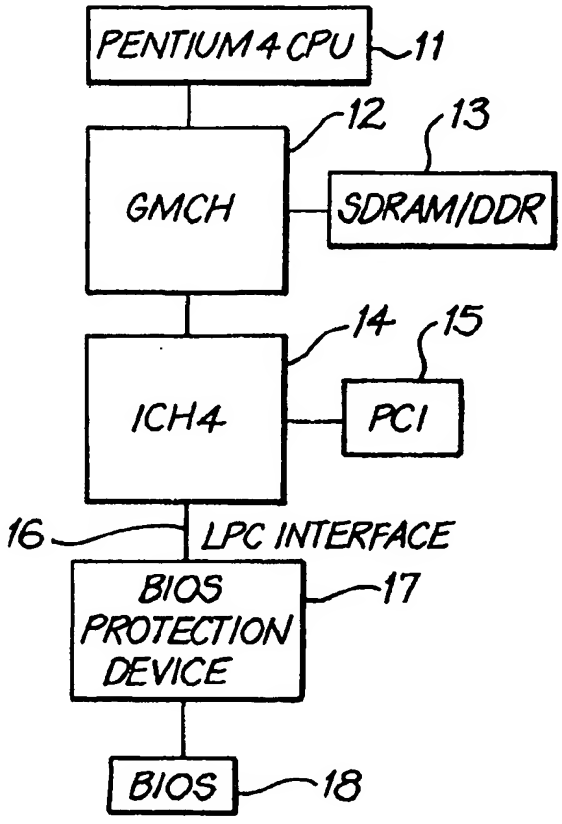
(81) Designated States *(unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available)*: AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States *(unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available)*: ARIPO (BW, GH,

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: BIOS PROTECTION DEVICE



(57) Abstract: A processing system including a bios protection device and method of protecting a bios is provided. The system comprises a central processor (11), and a BIOS memory device (18) to which the BIOS protection device (17) is interconnected by address and data paths (16). At start-up, the BIOS protection device (17) takes control of the memory address and data paths (16) and prevents execution of a boot program stored in the BIOS memory device (18) until the BIOS protection device (17) has verified that the boot program stored in the BIOS memory device (18) is authentic. The BIOS protection device (17) is connected to the processing system between a central processor (11) and the BIOS memory device (18), and includes address and data path interface connection means (24, 25), and an authentication processor (21). When power is applied to the BIOS protection device (17), the BIOS protection device (17) takes control of address and data path(s) (16) to which it is connected and the authentication processor (21) interrogates the BIOS memory device (18) connected to the address and data path(s) (16) to determine if the boot program contained in the BIOS memory device (18) is authentic. Only if the boot program is determined to be authentic does the BIOS protection device (17) release control of the address and data path(s) (16) to permit the central processor (11) to execute the boot program.

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GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:
— *with international search report*

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